

blood processing container outside the arcuate centrifugation channel in a rounded, flexed condition conforming to the arcuate centrifugation channel, the carrier serving to resist deformation of the processing container during insertion into or removal from the arcuate centrifugation channel, the blood processing container serving to convey blood in a circumferential path within the arcuate centrifugation channel while the arcuate centrifugation channel is rotated about [a] the rotational axis.

(Please amend claim 23 as follows:

23 (Twice Amended). A method for processing blood in an elongated generally flexible processing container occupying an arcuate centrifugation channel that extends about a rotational axis, the blood processing having having a dimension measured about the rotational axis that is larger than a dimension measured along the rotational axis, the processing container also having flexibility, the method comprising the steps of

attaching a carrier to shape the blood processing container outside the arcuate centrifugation channel in a rounded, flexed condition conforming to the arcuate centrifugation channel, the carrier serving to resist deformation of the processing container,

inserting the blood processing container into the arcuate centrifugation channel while shaped by the carrier, and

performing a blood processing procedure by conveying blood into the blood processing channel for flow in a circumferential path within the arcuate centrifugation channel while the arcuate centrifugation channel is rotated about [a] the rotational axis.

REMARKS

Independent Claims 1, 2, 16, 19, 22, and 23 have been amended.

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 20, 22, and 23 remain in the application. Claims 1, 2, and 19 are independent assembly claims, and claims 22 and 23 are independent method claims.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in light of these amendments and the remarks that follow.

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 6, 11 to 17, 19 to 20, 22, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) based upon Schoendorfer (US 4,445,883). Claims 7 to 10 and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) based upon Schoendorfer (US 4,445,883) in view of Mitchell et al (US 3,674,197).

All independent claims have been amended to define an elongated processing container that, in use, is rotated about a rotational axis and that has a dimension measured about the rotational axis (i.e., its length) that is larger than a dimension measured along the rotational axis (i.e., its height). The processing channel is inserted into and removed from an arcuate channel defined between inner and outer walls, so that fluids can be conveyed in a circumferential path about the rotation axis for

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separation in a centrifugal field. As defined in the amended claims, a carrier is secured to the processing container to shape the processing container outside the arcuate channel in a rounded, flexed condition conforming to the arcuate channel. The carrier limits deformation of the processing container during insertion into or removal from the arcuate channel.

Neither Schoendorfer or Mitchell are concerned with solving the fundamental problem the amended claims address; namely, shaping an elongated flexible container (one having a length greater than its height) in a rounded, flexed condition so that it can be reliably loaded into an arcuate flow channel to convey fluid in a circumferential path about a rotational axis during centrifugal processing. Schoendorfer and Mitchell have nothing to teach or suggest regarding the problem or the solution, because Schoendorfer and Mitchell place bags that are not elongated (their height being greater than their length) into cylindrical buckets or openings, to direct fluid in an axially path along the axis of rotation during centrifugal processing. There is nothing in Schoendorfer or Mitchell to teach or suggest shaping an elongated processing container (one having a length greater than its height) into a rounded flexed condition by securement to a carrier, for insertion or removal as a unit into an arcuate separation channel, to convey fluid in a circumferential path about a rotational axis. In Schoendorfer and Mitchell, the processing container is not elongated (its height being greater than its length), it is not placed into an arcuate channel, and it does not carry fluids in a circumferential path about a rotational axis.

For these reasons, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the pending rejection of the claims.

Allowance of claims 1, 2, 4 to 20, 22, and 23 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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